

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of controlling use of a printer on a network, said method comprising providing a key to a client on said network, wherein said key is used to submit a print job from said client to a printer on said network.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising using said key to encrypt said print job on said client prior to transmission of said print job to said printer.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising using said key or a related key to decrypt said print job for use by said printer.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said key is specific to a particular user, said method further comprising using said key to submit said print job from said client device only at the request of said particular user.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising generating said key with a print server on said network.
6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
storing a related key on a storage device of said print server;
associating said key with a printer driver for said printer; and
installing said driver and associated key on said client.
7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
encrypting said print job with said key resulting in an encrypted print job;
sending said encrypted print job from said client to said print server; and
attempting to decrypt said encrypted print job with said related key stored on said storage device of said print server;

wherein, if said related key correctly matches said key used to generate said encrypted print job, said print server successfully decrypts said encrypted print job and causes said printer to print said print job.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein installing said driver further comprises re-installing said driver with said associated key on said client if a driver without said key is already installed on said client.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein installing said driver further comprises re-configuring said driver on said client with said associated key if a driver without said key is already installed on said client.

10. The method of claim 6, wherein installing said driver with said associated key further comprises installing said key on said client without installing said driver if a driver configured to use said key is already installed on said client.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein said key allows said client to print to multiple networked printers managed by said print server.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein said key is provided to multiple clients.

13. A method of controlling a user's ability to cause a client to send a print job to a printer, said method comprising providing said client with a key specifically configured for said user, wherein said client will refuse to submit a print job to said printer for a particular user unless said key associated with that user has been provided to said client.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:
generating said key with a print server; and
transmitting said key to said client from said print server over a network to which said print server, client and printer are all connected.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising:
storing a related key on a storage device of said print server;
associating said key with a printer driver for said printer; and
installing said driver with said associated key on said client.
16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
encrypting said print job with said key resulting in an encrypted print job;
sending said encrypted print job to said print server; and
attempting to decrypt said encrypted print job with said related key on said storage device of said print server;
wherein, if said related key correctly matches said key used to generate said encrypted print job, said print server successfully decrypts said encrypted print job and causes said printer to print said print job.
17. The method of claim 14, wherein said key allows said user to cause said client to print to multiple networked printers managed by said print server.
18. The method of claim 13, wherein said key is provided to multiple clients.
19. A system for controlling a client's ability to send a print job to a printer on a network, said system comprising:
at least one client;
a print server for managing distribution of print jobs to one or more printers; and
a network connecting said at least one client device, said print server and said one or more printers;
wherein said print server requires a client to use a key provided to said client when said client is submitting a print job to said print server.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein said print server is configured to:
generate said key with a utility;
store a related key on a storage device;
associate said key with a printer driver for said printer; and
install said key in association with said printer driver on said client.
21. The system of claim 20, wherein said client is configured to:
encrypt said print job with said key resulting in an encrypted print job; and
send said encrypted print job to said print server;
said printer server being further configured to attempt to decrypt said encrypted print job with said related key stored on said storage device.
22. The system of claim 21, wherein, if said related key correctly matches said key used to generate said encrypted print job, said print server successfully decrypts said encrypted print job and causes said printer to print said print job.
23. The system of claim 19, wherein said key allows said client to print to multiple printers managed by said print server.
24. The system of claim 19, wherein said key is provided to multiple clients.
25. The system of claim 19, wherein said key allows any user to cause said client to send said print job to said print server.
26. The system of claim 19, wherein said at least one client comprises a personal computer.
27. The system of claim 20, wherein said configuration utility is an embedded web server that resides on said print server.

28. The system of claim 20, wherein said storage device is incorporated into said print server.

29. The system of claim 20, wherein said storage device is connected to said network, but separate from said print server.

30. A system for controlling a user's ability to cause a client to print a print job to a printer on a network, said system comprising:

a client; and

a print server for managing at least one network printer, wherein said print server provides a key to said client for use in submitting a print job, said key being specific to a particular user of said client;

wherein said client will refuse to submit a print job for a user unless said client has been previously provided with a key specific to that user.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein said print server comprises:

a configuration utility for configuring said key; and

a storage device for storing a related key.

32. The system of claim 31, wherein said print server:

configures said key specifically for said user with said configuration utility;

stores a related key on said storage device;

associates said key with a printer driver for said printer; and

installs said key in association with said driver on said client.

33. The system of claim 32, wherein said user causes said client to:

encrypt said print job with said key resulting in an encrypted print job; and

send said encrypted print job to said print server;

said print server being configured to attempt to decrypt said encrypted print job with said related key stored on said storage device.

34. The system of claim 33, wherein, if said related key correctly matches said key used to generate said encrypted print job, said print server successfully decrypts said encrypted print job and causes said printer to print said print job.
35. The system of claim 30, wherein said key allows said user to cause said client to print to multiple printers managed by said print server.
36. The system of claim 30, wherein said key is provided to multiple clients.
37. The system of claim 31, wherein said configuration utility is an embedded web server that resides on said print server.
38. A system controlling use of a printer on a network, said system comprising:
a client connected to said network for generating a print job for said printer; and
means for providing a key to said client, wherein said key is used to submit a print job from said client to said printer.
39. The system of claim 38, further comprising means on said client for encrypting said print job using said key to produce an encrypted print job for transmission to said printer.
40. The system of claim 38, further comprising decryption means for using a related key to decrypt said print job for use by said printer.
41. The system of claim 40, wherein said decryption means comprise a printer server.
42. The system of claim 38, wherein said key is used by multiple clients on said network.

43. The system of claim 38, wherein said key is specific to a particular user, said client being configured to use said key to submit said print job only at the request of said particular user.

44. The system of claim 38, wherein said means for providing a key comprise a print server on said network.

45. The system of claim 44, wherein said printer server further comprises:
means for storing a related key on a storage device of said print server;
means for associating said key with a printer driver for said printer; and
means for installing said key in association with said printer driver on said client.

46. The system of claim 45, wherein said printer server further comprises:
means for attempting to decrypt said encrypted print job with a related key;
wherein, if said related key correctly matches said key used to generate said encrypted print job, said print server successfully decrypts said encrypted print job and causes said printer to print said print job.